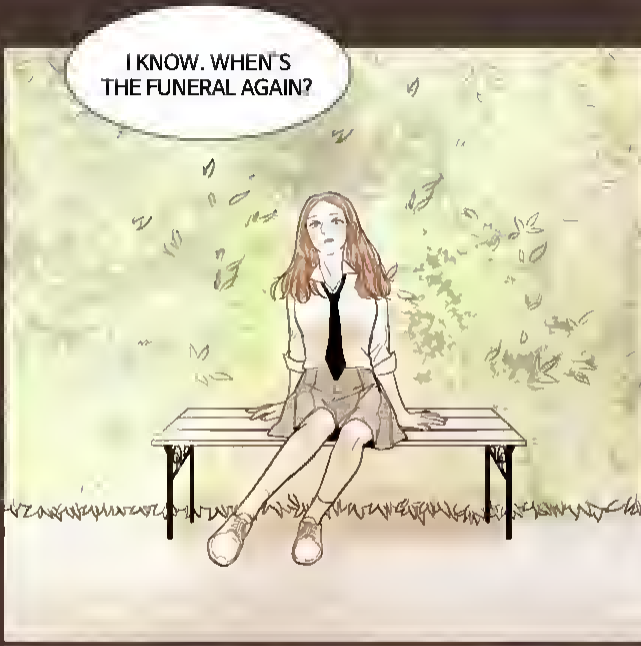
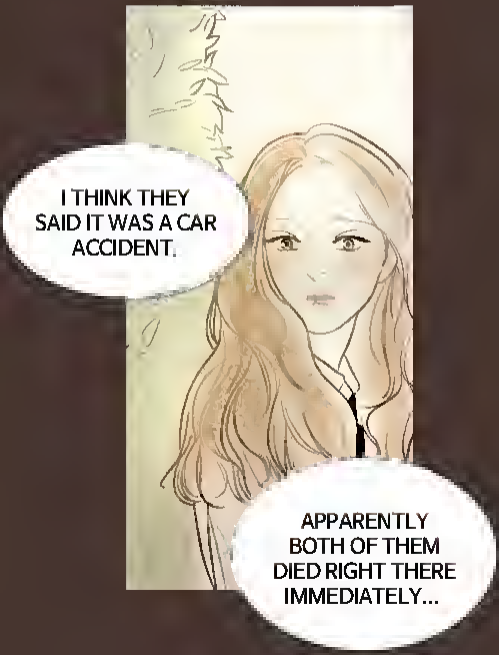
POOR THING.
SHE WAS SO CLOSE TO HER PARENTS.


I KNOW. WHEN'S THE FUNERAL AGAIN?


I THINK THEY SAID IT WAS A CAR ACCIDENT.
APPARENTLY BOTH OF THEM DIED RIGHT THERE IMMEDIATELY...

YOU REALLY NEVER KNOW WHEN IT COULD ALL COME TO AN END...

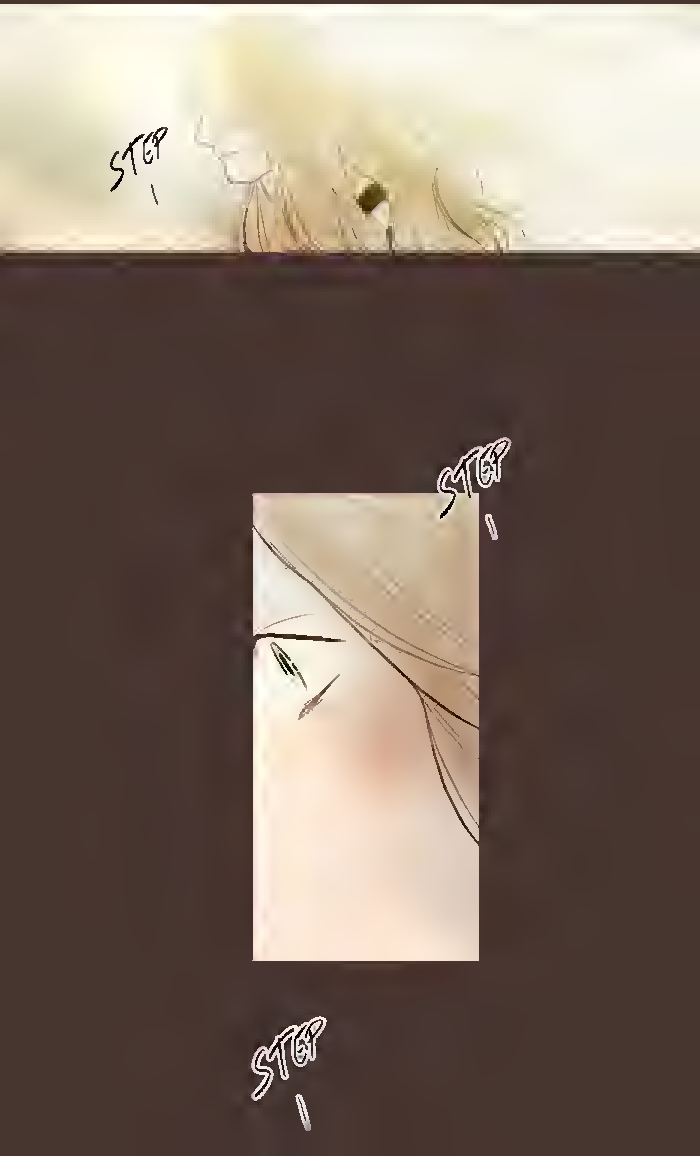
I WONDER WHY
I WENT TO THAT CEMETERY.

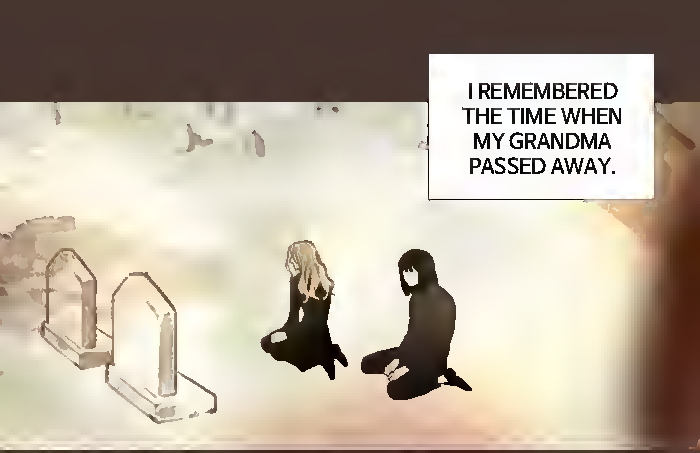
WHY DID
I GO SEE SARAH?

I'M NOT SURE
OF THE REASON
EVEN NOW.

BUT
WHAT I KNOW
FOR SURE

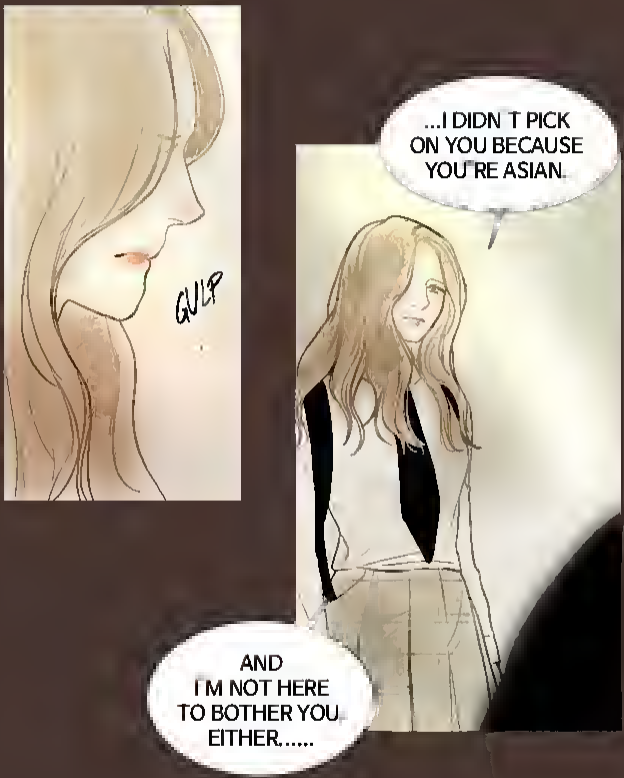
IS THAT WITH EVERY
STEP THAT I TOOK
TOWARDS HER


STEP
1
STEP
1
STEP
1


I REMEMBERED THE TIME WHEN MY GRANDMA PASSED AWAY.

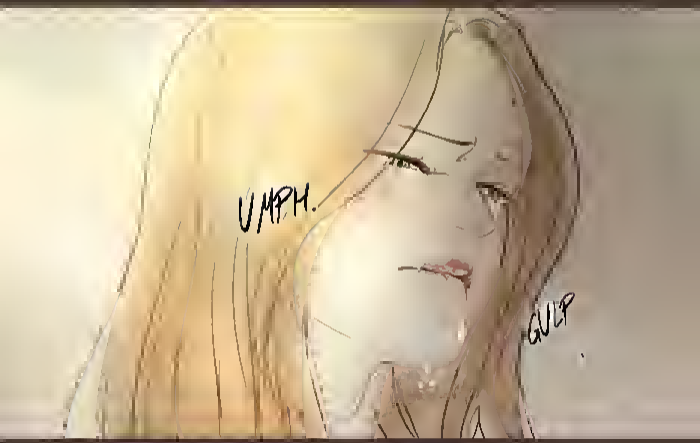
A FEELING OF REGRET ALSO WASHED OVER ME
THROB
THROB
AT THE THINGS THAT I DID TO HER OUT OF A SENSE OF INFERIORITY.

WHAT?
DID YOU COME BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO SEE HOW ASIANS HAVE FUNERALS?
ARE YOU HERE TO HARASS ME AGAIN?


GULP
...I DIDN T PICK ON YOU BECAUSE YOU RE ASIAN.
AND I M NOT HERE TO BOTHER YOU EITHER.....

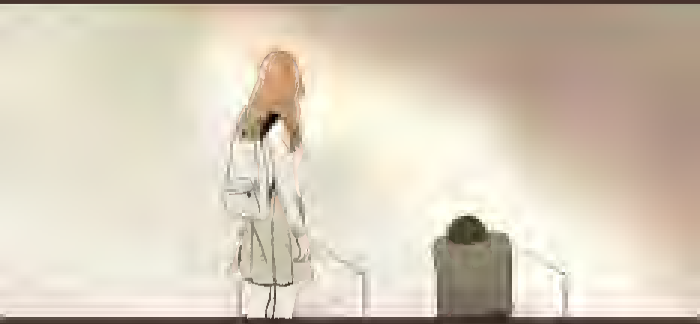
I DON T WANT
TO HEAR ANYTHING
SO PLEASE JUST
GET LOST.
.....

JUST SCREW OFF-
.....!

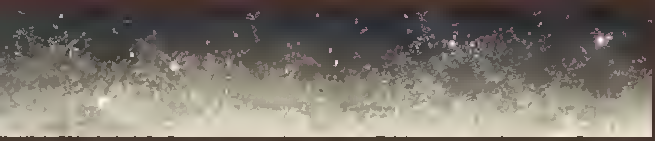

UMPH.
GULP

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

WHY ARE YOU STANDING THERE CRYING LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF MY PARENT S GRAVE? !



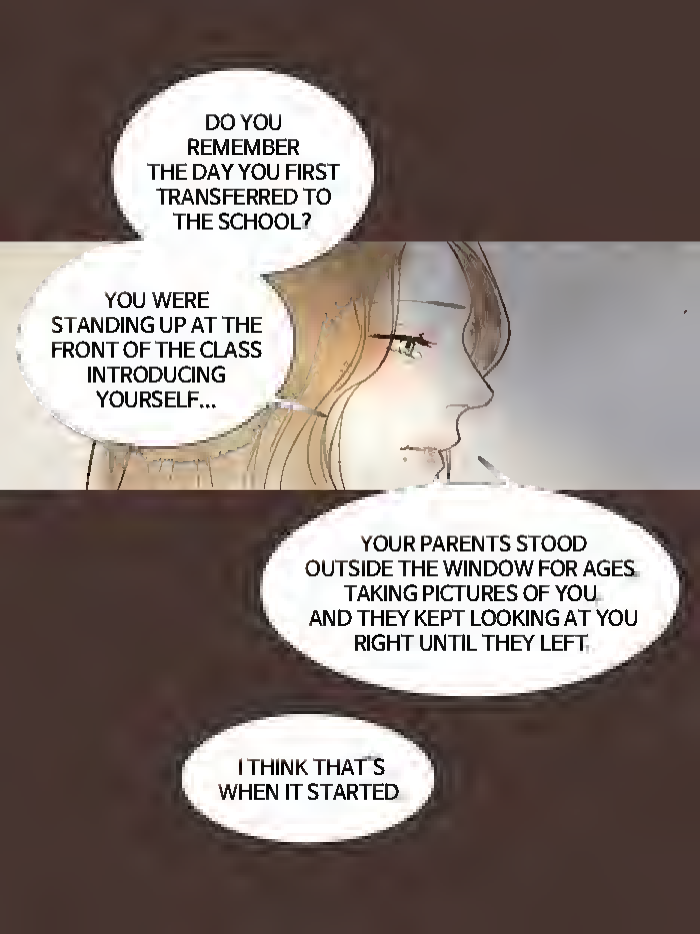
# Winter Woods



I WAS ABANDONED BY MY PARENTS WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
AND EVEN MY GRANDMA, THE ONLY PERSON WHO LOVED ME, PASSED AWAY.
THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO PICK ON YOU.

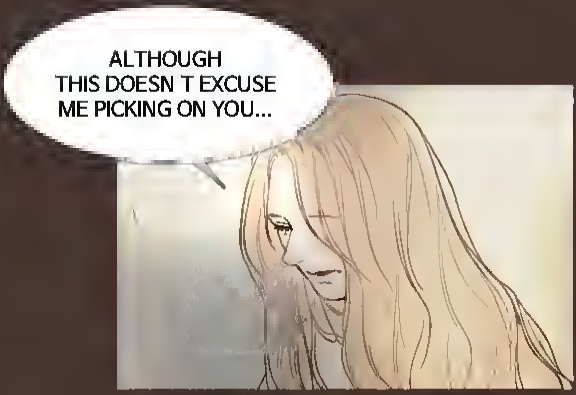
I WAS JUST...
SO JEALOUS

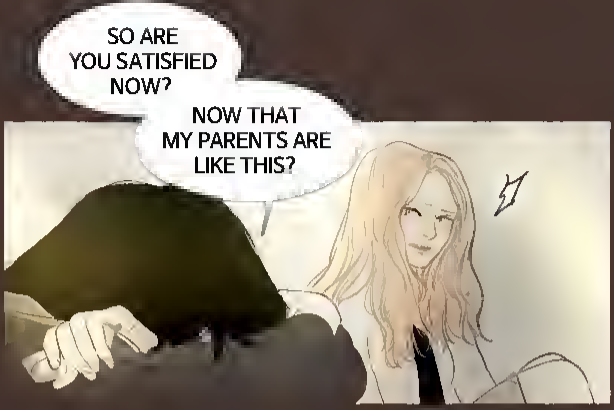
...WHY ME OF ALL PEOPLE?

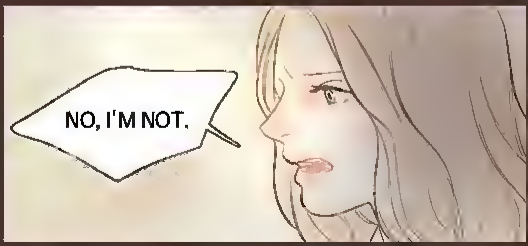

DO YOU REMEMBER THE DAY YOU FIRST TRANSFERRED TO THE SCHOOL?
YOU WERE STANDING UP AT THE FRONT OF THE CLASS INTRODUCING YOURSELF...
YOUR PARENTS STOOD OUTSIDE THE WINDOW FOR AGES TAKING PICTURES OF YOU AND THEY KEPT LOOKING AT YOU RIGHT UNTIL THEY LEFT
I THINK THAT'S WHEN IT STARTED

EVEN AFTER THAT, YOUR PARENTS TOOK YOU TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY,
AND YOU EVEN WENT HOME WITH THEM AFTER SCHOOL...
.....

...I WAS JEALOUS OF YOU BEING SO LOVED.
OF COURSE. THERE ARE PROBABLY LOTS OF KIDS AT SCHOOL WITH HAPPY FAMILIES.
I KNOW THAT.
BUT TO ME... YOU SEEMED TO KEEP REMINDING ME
OF THE FACT THAT I DON'T HAVE A FAMILY OR MY GRANDMA.
IT FELT SO UNFAIR THAT I DIDN'T HAVE SOMETHING THAT EVERYONE ELSE NATURALLY SEEMS TO HAVE...


ALTHOUGH
THIS DOESN T EXCUSE
ME PICKING ON YOU...

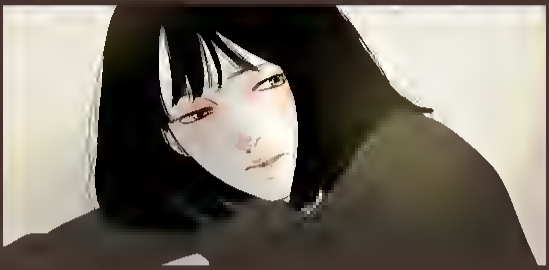

SO ARE YOU SATISFIED NOW?
NOW THAT MY PARENTS ARE LIKE THIS?


NO, I'M NOT.

SEEING YOU,
IT REMINDED ME
OF MYSELF.
THE DAY THAT
MY PARENTS LEFT,
AND THE DAY
THAT MY GRANDMA...
PASSED AWAY...

IT HURTS SO MUCH...
I DEEPLY REGRET DOING SUCH A FOOLISH THING TO YOU.

REALLY...



.....AH...

UGH...
UHH
I TRIED SO HARD NOT TO CRY...!
I SWORE THAT I WOULDN T GET WEAK NOW THAT MY PARENTS ARE GONE...!

I'M SORRY FOR BEING SO AWFUL TO YOU BEFORE
UH
UHPH
UGH
I MEAN IT. I WON'T DO IT AGAIN

SOB
SOB
SOB

AFTER THAT DAY.

I BECAME CLOSER TO SARAH THAN ANYONE ELSE. WHICH I NEVER WOULD HAVE IMAGINED.

I THINK IT WAS ALSO AROUND THAT TIME THAT I DECIDED TO STOP LIVING IN CONSTANT DEPRESSION AND LIVE A NORMAL LIFE.

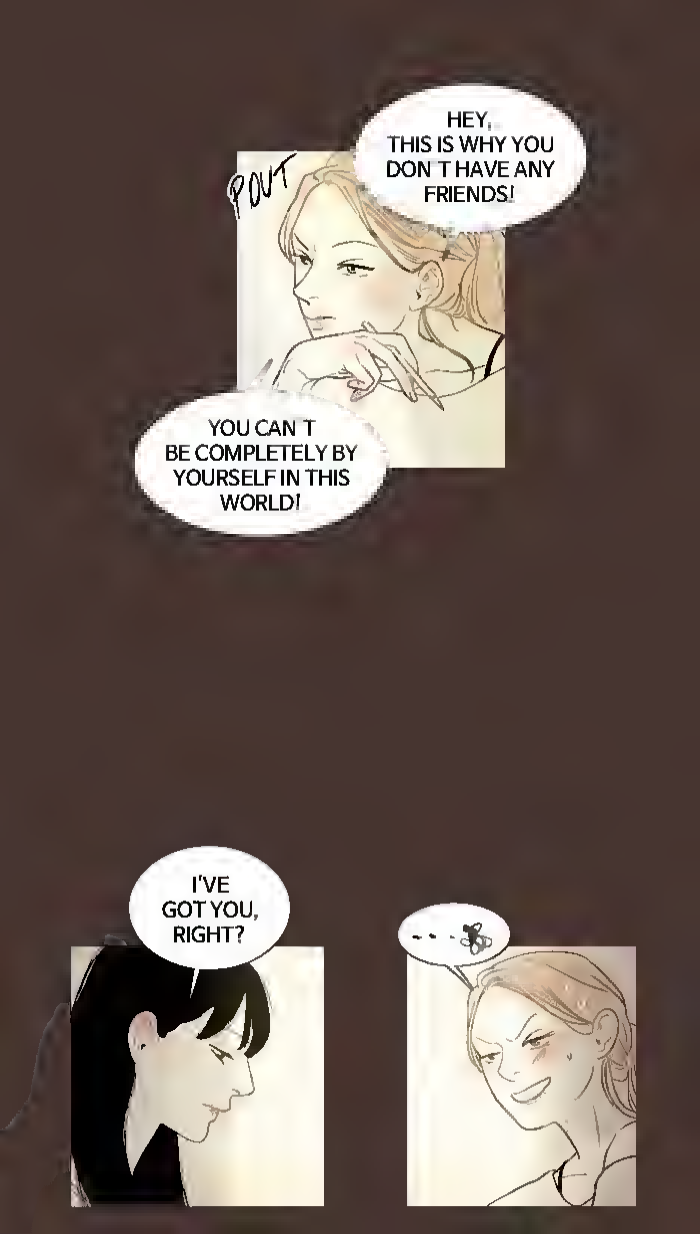
〈FIVE YEARS LATER〉
AT THE TIME, SINCE I LIKED SCRIBBLING DOWN STORIES THAT CAME TO MIND, I THINK I STARTED DREAMING OF BECOMING A WRITER AFTER GRADUATING.
UNLIKE ME, SARAH ALWAYS REMAINED RATIONAL EVEN AFTER HER PARENTS PASSED AWAY.
SHE WAS EXTREMELY STUDIOUS, AND SHE QUICKLY FINISHED HER STUDIES AND ENTERED A LAB.

I WONDER WHAT'S GOING ON IN THAT MIND OF HERS..
SARAH~
.....
SARAH SARAH SARAH SARAH SARAH~~

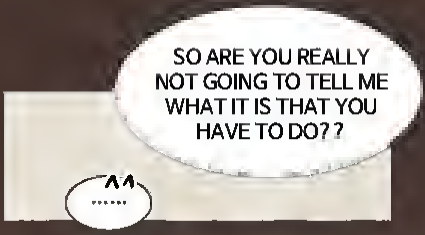
I'll SURE ANSWER QUICKLY~
WHEN DID YOU TURN INTO SUCH A ROBOT?
YOU DON'T EVEN LOOK LIKE A PERSON ANYMORE
WHAT?
STUDY STUDY STUDY~
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE ON EMOTIONS
BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING THAT I NEED TO DO.

YOU'VE GOTTEN SO STIFF SINCE YOU STARTED FOCUSING SO MUCH ON YOUR STUDIES.
HMM-
WHAT THE HECK IS IT THAT YOU NEED TO DO?

...LATER.


HEY,
THIS IS WHY YOU
DON'T HAVE ANY
FRIENDS!
POUT
YOU CAN'T
BE COMPLETELY BY
YOURSELF IN THIS
WORLD!
I'VE
GOT YOU,
RIGHT?
- - -

ALTHOUGH YOU ONLY HAVE ME, TOO.
BLUSH
N-NO I DON'T.
ON THE INTERNET-
JUST BE QUIET AND WRITE YOUR STORIES OR WHATEVER. YOU'D BETTER MAKE IT GOOD THIS TIME. DON'T SCREW IT UP AGAIN.
SINK


SO ARE YOU REALLY NOT GOING TO TELL ME WHAT IT IS THAT YOU HAVE TO DO??
^^
.....

WHY THE HELL HAVE YOU CHANGED LIKE THIS? YOU DIDN'T USE TO BE THIS WAY!
AT LEAST YOU WEREN'T THE KIND OF PERSON TO DO SOMETHING THIS RIDICULOUS...!

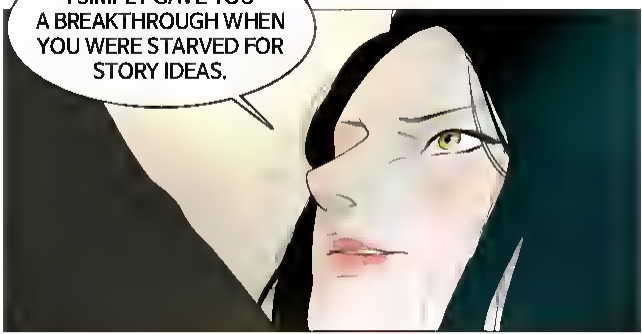
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I THOUGHT WHEN THAT HUBERT GUY WAS TELLING ME ABOUT YOU?
SINCE YOU'RE MY FRIEND, I FIGURED THAT I SHOULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT HUBERT WAS SAYING. OBVIOUSLY!
AND YET...!

I WAS PERSUADING MYSELF THAT IT S MORE NORMAL TO TRUST YOUR FRIEND RATHER THAN SOMEONE YOU JUST MET.

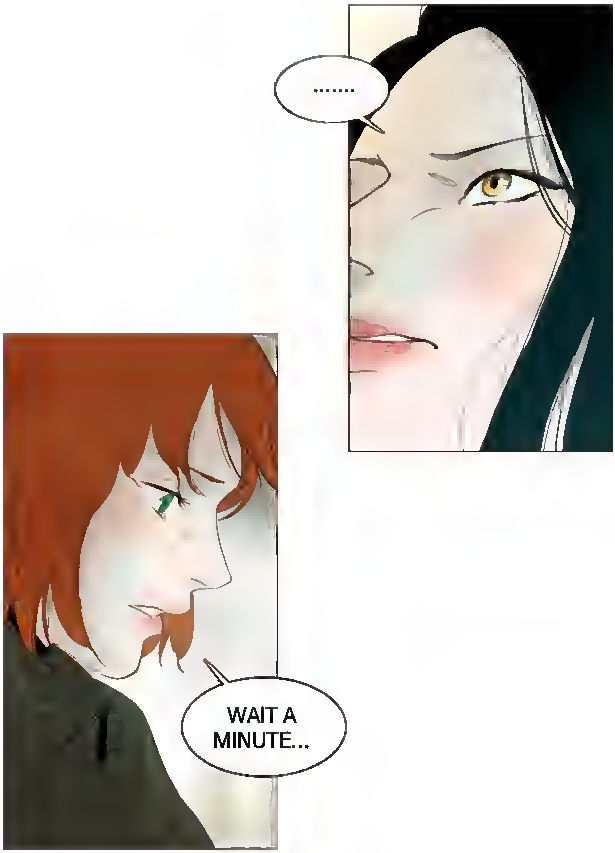
IS THIS ALL THAT OUR WHOLE RELATIONSHIP AMOUNTS TO?

WAS IT JUST ME HOLDING ONTO YOU AS A FRIEND?

I SIMPLY GAVE YOU A BREAKTHROUGH WHEN YOU WERE STARVED FOR STORY IDEAS.



SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT INSTALLING A SECURITY CAMERA AND BUGGING DEVICES IN MY APARTMENT, AND DECEIVING ME WERE YOUR WAY OF GIVING ME A BREAKTHROUGH?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!


.....
WAIT A MINUTE...

NOW THAT THINGS ARE LIKE THIS, LET ME JUST ASK YOU ONE THING.
WHAT WAS I TO YOU?
WAS I EVEN A FRIEND?

IN FACT, TO MAKE IT EVEN CLEARER, TELL ME WHICH YOU WOULD CHOOSE,
ME OR YOUR RESEARCH. RIGHT NOW!

THIS ISN'T SOMETHING THAT I CAN CHOOSE LIKE THAT
WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO GIVE A CLEAR-CUT ANSWER IF SOMEONE ASKED YOU TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ME AND YOUR GRANDMA?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHY ARE YOU BRINGING UP MY GRANDMA?
WAIT...
YOU'RE NOT PLANNING ON DOING ANYTHING WEIRD LIKE USING WINTER TO BRING SOMEONE BACK FROM THE DEAD, RIGHT?

LIKE THAT
ALCHEMIST!

Winter Woods

원 터 우 즈

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